

Message Text

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DRAFTED BY S/S-O:JRKAUFMANN

APPROVED BY S/S-O:LLMACFARLANE

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FM SECSTATE WASHDC

TO USNMR SHAPE IMMEDIATE

USCINCEUR IMMEDIATE

S E C R E T STATE 242753

EXDIS, MILITARY ADDEE HANDLE AS SPECAT EXCLUSIVE

FOLLOWING REPEAT LONDON 15592 ACTION SECSTATE INFO MBFR

VIENNA NATO BONN PARIS 30 SEP 76

QUOTE

S E C R E T LONDON 15592

EXDIS

STATE PASS SECDEF, USNMR SHAPE, USCINCEUR AS SPECAT
EXCLUSIVE

E. O. 11652:XGDS-1

TAGS: PARM, NATO, MBFR, UK

SUBJECT: FRENCH DATA PROBLEM AND GERMAN STRATEGY
PAPER--WHAT NEXT?

1. IN ORDER TO KEEP TRILATERAL LINES FREE FROM TANGLE,
ON SEPTEMBER 29 WE BRIEFED TERENCE WOOD OF THE FCO
ON THE SUBSTANCE OF THE SLOSS-RUTH CONVERSATION IN
BRUSSELS. AT THE SAME TIME, WE ASKED WOOD FOR INITIAL
UK REACTIONS TO THE GERMAN STRATEGY PAPER (STATE
238270).

2. THE BRITISH BELIEVE THAT THE GERMANS HAVE ADOPTED
A MAXIMALIST POSITION IN THEIR VERSION OF THE STRATEGIC
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PAPER. WOOD OBSERVED THAT THE FRG FOUND ITSELF ISOLATED

AT THE SEPTEMBER 23 TRILATERAL ON THE ISSUE OF EXCLUSION OF FRENCH FORCES FROM THE DATA IN THE DRAFT GUIDANCE TO THE AD HOC GROUP. FALLING BACK, GERMANS THEREFORE ARTFULLY ADOPTED PACKAGE APPROACH WITH OBLIGATORY STRATEGIC PAPER. THE CURRENT FRG DRAFT OF THAT PAPER, WOOD WENT ON, WOULD PROBABLY ENSURE A FUNDAMENTAL OBJECTION FROM PARIS TO THE WHOLE EXERCISE AND THUS COULD KILL FOR THE FORSEEABLE FUTURE THE TABLING OF REVISED BLUE DATA IN VIENNA. IN UK VIEW, THE GERMANS MIGHT NOT OBJECT TO SUCH AN ABORTED CONCLUSION TO THIS EFFORT SINCE FRG FUNDAMENTALLY FEARS THAT TABLING WESTERN DATA IN VIENNA WHICH EXCLUDES FRENCH FORCES COULD WELL BE THE FIRST LOOSE THREAD THAT WOULD EVENTUALLY UNRAVEL THE CONCEPT OF THE COMMON COLLECTIVE CEILING.

3. THE CHALLENGE THEN IS TO FIND LANGUAGE FOR THE STRATEGIC PAPER WHICH BOTH MEETS FRG CONCERNS OVER PROTECTING THE COMMON CEILING AND AT THE SAME TIME AVOIDS WAVING A RED FLAG AT THE FRENCH WHICH WOULD LIKELY PRODUCE A RESOLUTE AND DOCTRINAIRE "NON" IN PARIS. WOOD ARGUED THAT CURRENT GERMAN PAPER CERTAINLY DOES NOT MEET THIS SECOND OBJECTIVE. THE INTRODUCTORY PARAGRAPH WHICH IS "UNNECESSARILY PROVOCATIVE" CONTAINS IMPLICIT THREAT THAT THE ALLIES MIGHT RIDE OVER THE FRENCH AT A LATER DATE AND TABLE DATA INCLUDING THEIR FORCES. NOT THE MOST APPEALING WAY TO BEGIN, WOOD SAID WRYLY. MOREOVER, PARAGRAPH A IS THE SECOND PUNCH OF THE ONE/TWO COMBINATION. IT USES THE 980,000 AND 790,000 FIGURES. THESE TOTALS WOULD IMMEDIATELY CONFUSE THE FRENCH AND AROUSE THEIR SUSPICION. PARIS COULD CONCLUDE THAT THE ALLIES WERE PUTTING BACK ON THE TABLE IN PARIS AND VIENNA THE CARDS (980,000) THEY WERE AGREEING IN BRUSSELS NOT TO DEAL (920,000). WHY, WOOD ASKED, DO WE HAVE TO RUB FRENCH NOSES IN IT AT A MOMENT WHEN WE WANT THEM TO LOOK THE OTHER WAY.

4. SO SOMEONE IN LONDON OR WASHINGTON NEEDS TO TURN THE GERMAN UGLY DUCKLING INTO A DISCREET AND ELEGANTLY FORMED SWAN THAT WILL FLOAT IN PARIS. IN ANY EVENT, HMG THINKS REVISED STRATEGY PAPER SHOULD BEGIN WITH
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EXPLICIT SWEETNER FOR THE FRENCH. THAT IS, BECAUSE OF FRENCH CONCERNS, WE HAVE DECIDED TO EXCLUDE THEIR FORCES FROM THE REVISED NATO FIGURES WE WILL TABLE IN THE NEAR FUTURE IN VIENNA. WOOD BELIEVES SUCH A BEGINNING CAN BE FASHIONED A WAY THAT PROTECTS CURRENT NATO NEGOTIATING POSITION AND FUTURE ALLIED OPTIONS BUT DOES NOT CRUELY AND FUNDAMENTALLY CONFRONT THE FRENCH. THEREFORE, WOOD WILL BE WORKING IN THE NEXT

FEW DAYS ON A REVISED DRAFT OF GERMAN PAPER. IN THAT CONNECTION, WOOD SAID HE WOULD OBVIOUSLY BE MOST INTERESTED IN HOW WASHINGTON VIEWS CURRENT FRG PAPER AND HOW US SEES THIS EFFORT TO SOLVE FRENCH PROBLEM UNFOLDING.

5. COMMENT. THE FCO IS CLEARLY DISAPPOINTED THAT THE BELGIAN INITIATIVE WHICH BRITISH HOPED WOULD GET US PAST DATA PROBLEM WITH NEAT FINESSE HAS NOW BEEN TIED BY GERMANS TO PRESENTATION OF STRATEGIC PAPER IN PARIS. IN UK JUDGMENT, ALTHOUGH SOMETHING MUST NOW BE CONVEYED TO FRENCH BECAUSE OF GERMAN INSISTENCE, IT NEED NOT AND SHOULD NOT BE OVERLY SPECIFIC OR COMPREHENSIVE. NEVERTHELESS, WE DOUBT THAT THE BRITISH WILL DIRECTLY TAKE ON THE FRG IF THE GERMANS CLING TO THEIR CURRENT TOUGH POSITION ON THE STRATEGY PAPER. WITH ALL ITS OTHER WELL KNOWN PROBLEMS, THE LAST THING HMG WANTS AT THIS POINT IS A SERIOUS MBFR SQUABBLE WITH BONN.

ARMSTRONG
UNQUOTE
ROBINSON

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